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DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT FEIERSTEIN, AND NEA/ARP
WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS NSC ZARATE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2017

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SUBJECT: USG DELEGATION REQUESTED TO PUSH BADAWI ISSUE

REF: SANAA 2204

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen A. Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This message is an action request see para 4.

¶1. (C) Summary. Reftel included Post recommendation for a senior-level ROYG delegation to travel to Washington for discussions on options for - and obstacles to - resolving the Badawi case. On reflection, we have concluded that it would be far more valuable for a USG delegation to travel to Yemen for these talks. Ambassador raised the possibility at a December 11 meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister al-Dhabbi, who reacted positively, agreeing that it would provide an opportunity for senior USG officials to hear directly from President Saleh on the subject. End Summary.

¶2. (C) While a ROYG delegation traveling to Washington for talks on this subject might serve to advance discussions, the reality is that policy in this country is determined almost exclusively by President Ali Abdullah Saleh. That being the case, it strikes us as much more useful to have senior USG officials travel here for discussions, if an appointment can be made with the President, as well as key ministerial advisors. Deputy Foreign Minister al-Dhabbi - who had originally suggested the ROYG delegation - responded positively to the proposal at a meeting today, noting the importance of having a direct exchange with the President on ways to resolve this issue.

¶3. (C) Ideally we would like to see the USG delegation travel to Yemen in early January for these talks. This notional timeframe is driven by two issues: the general requirement to resolve the Badawi issue as quickly as possible before it further impedes important areas of bilateral cooperation, and the specific matter of the Secretary's participation in the rescheduled Forum for the Future, which we understand is dependent on resolution of this case.

¶4. (C) We propose that the delegation be comprised of no more than three members and suggest they be drawn from the White House/NSC, State and DOJ. We request an early response to this proposal, recognizing that the intervening Eid al Adha and Christmas holidays will soon make planning difficult.

SECHE